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COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 49/141 of 20 December 1994, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community", by which, inter alia, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the resolution to the Assembly at its fifty-first session.

II. CONSULTATIONS AND EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

2. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) was established on 4 July 1973 and was granted observer status in the General Assembly on 16 October 1991.

3. In January 1995, CARICOM and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) signed a memorandum of understanding for cooperation, which offers opportunities to advance cooperation between the United Nations and CARICOM in a number of areas of critical importance.

4. Participating in the special commemorative meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of CARICOM, Dr. Edwin Carrington, stressed the fact that the 14 Caribbean Community States that are also States Members of the United Nations had not only benefited substantially from working with the United Nations and its programmes and the specialized agencies, but had also collectively and individually made significant contributions to its ideals and purposes, including contributing to the peace processes in Haiti, Central America, Namibia and South Africa.

5. The Secretary-General of CARICOM held consultations with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his senior officials in October 1995 and in February 1996. In November 1995, he presented a gift to the United Nations on behalf of the States members of CARICOM. In February 1996, Secretary-General Carrington participated in the meeting between the United Nations and regional organizations and arrangements with which the United Nations has cooperated in preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping, which had been convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to discuss modalities and principles for such cooperation, and new, practical and more effective ways of working together.

6. A senior official of CARICOM attended the fourth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, held at United Nations Headquarters in April 1996, which was devoted to reviewing progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

7. In a message from the Secretary-General to the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, delivered by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Public Affairs on 3 July 1996 in Barbados, emphasis was put on the vital role that is played by members of CARICOM in furthering the United Nations causes of peace, development and democracy. Reflecting the increasing complexity of international relations,

he stated that the United Nations continued to place a premium on cooperation and coordination at the regional level, attaching the utmost importance to building ever closer ties with CARICOM. A particular tribute was paid in this context to CARICOM's active involvement in United Nations efforts in Haiti.

8. Cooperation between the United Nations and CARICOM was considered by the twenty-second meeting of the Standing Committee of Ministers Responsible for Foreign Affairs, held on 13 and 14 May 1996 at Kingston, Jamaica, and by the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM, held from 3 to 6 July in Barbados.

9. In the final communiqué of the Standing Committee, the Ministers agreed that the areas of activities for joint pursuit between CARICOM and the United Nations should include follow-up to the global conferences; the advancement of the New International Human Order; issues related to the law of the sea; follow-up and implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States; cooperation in the development of poverty reduction programmes; peacekeeping; diplomatic training; governance and development in the Caribbean, and strengthening of the Regional Secretariat Information Base. They also welcomed the enhanced cooperation between the CARICOM and United Nations secretariats since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 49/141, which they believed would be to the benefit and security of the region. They expressed the hope that the activities outlined for cooperation would be shortly embodied in a cooperation agreement between the two organizations.

10. In the final communiqué of their seventeenth meeting, the Heads of Government of CARICOM noted the development of closer relations between the region and the United Nations, which had been reflected in the presence of the Secretary-General of CARICOM at the meeting between the United Nations and regional organizations convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. They also stressed the importance of furthering the Community's possible role in the development of peace and security within the Caribbean region. They expressed their appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for promoting this heightened level of cooperation.

11. In letters dated 22 and 25 July 1996, the Chairman of CARICOM, Prime Minister Lester Bird of Antigua and Barbuda, informed the Secretary-General that the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM had mandated him to mediate a solution to the current difficulties in Saint Kitts and Nevis and that Sir Alister McIntyre and Sir Shridath Ramphal, former Secretaries-General of CARICOM and the Commonwealth, respectively, had joined him in the effort in a Chairman's Group. In his reply to the Chairman of CARICOM in a letter dated 2 August 1996, the Secretary-General expressed his satisfaction at knowing that CARICOM had the matter well in hand, and noted that its initiative in this matter was fully consistent with the close collaboration favoured by the Secretary-General, on the basis of a division of labour, between the world body and regional organizations, in accordance with their comparative advantages.

12. The Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat is the focal point for cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. In

January 1996, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs delegated the responsibility for cooperation with the regional organizations, including CARICOM, to an Assistant Secretary-General in the Department of Political Affairs. Following a review of this issue, a more flexible mechanism of cooperation and coordination was introduced. This mechanism will facilitate more pragmatic and cost-effective cooperation between the two organizations through the establishment of focal points within the departments, offices, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system, and CARICOM and its associated institutions.

13. The Department of Political Affairs maintains close contact with the Permanent Observer of CARICOM to the United Nations, Permanent Representatives of States members of CARICOM and with officials of the CARICOM secretariat. At the invitation of CARICOM, the Department was represented at the officials-level meeting, which preceded the twenty-second meeting of the Standing Committee of CARICOM Foreign Ministers in May 1996. The Department participates in ongoing consultations with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Organization of American States, CARICOM and the University of the West Indies, on arrangements for a workshop on governance and development in the Caribbean proposed to be held in early 1997.

III. INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

14. On 15 March 1996, the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, in pursuance of paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 49/141, dispatched a letter to the heads of departments, programmes, and offices of the United Nations system requesting them to convey their contributions for the report of the Secretary-General by 1 June 1996. A summary of their replies is set out below.

1. United Nations Secretariat

Office of Legal Affairs

15. At the request of CARICOM, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) held a regional seminar on international trade law in Barbados from 23 to 26 April 1996 which was attended by approximately 70 persons. The seminar was funded mainly by the Trust Fund for UNCITRAL Symposia ($55,000) and the Caribbean Regional Institutional Strengthening Project ($13,000). The Government of Barbados generously provided the conference room facility, on-site transportation and other miscellaneous goods and services.

Department of Humanitarian Affairs

16. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs has pursued close cooperation with CARICOM in its activities in the Caribbean, notably in the area of disaster prevention and response. The United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator, a precursor to the Department, implemented the Pan-Caribbean Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Project with 28 States/territories in the region during

1981-1991. The inception of this project and its activities were carried out in close cooperation with CARICOM.

17. When the Pan-Caribbean Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Project ended, CARICOM adopted a proposal to establish the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA), based in Barbados. The Relief Coordination Branch of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has a standing working-level arrangement with the Agency for the exchange of information on sudden natural disasters, including hurricanes.

Department of Public Information

18. The Department of Public Information produced 24 special radio programmes in Dutch, English and French-Creole between January 1995 and February 1996. The programmes included the Secretary-General's message to the Conference of the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, interviews with the Secretary-General of CARICOM as well as the joint endeavours illustrating the current state of cooperation between the United Nations and CARICOM. During the same period, the Department produced 34 radio programmes in Dutch, English, French and French-Creole dedicated to issues which concern the small island States in the Caribbean region. Several separate special programmes were produced focusing on the socio-economic development strategies of States members of CARICOM.

19. In addition, the Department produced a 30-minute documentary video in 1995 on issues relating to the sustainable development of small island States. In January 1995, a press kit entitled "Programme of action for small island States" was produced in English; the French version was made available in March 1995. The Director of the Caribbean Office, based in Trinidad and Tobago, continues to serve CARICOM countries and the CARICOM secretariat.

Office of Conference and Support Services

20. The Office of Conference and Support Services is ready to provide training on the organization and delivery of conference services to the CARICOM secretariat, preferably through properly focused visits of CARICOM staff to Headquarters which are intended to familiarize them with conference-servicing operations and are organized on a cost-free basis for the United Nations.

2. United Nations Children's Fund

21. During 1995, as in previous years, the UNICEF/Caribbean Area Office has focused on capacity building, empowerment and geographically targeted service delivery. New initiatives, agreed upon with government and non-government counterparts, are complementary to objectives set by the Master Plan of Operations and have centred on social development within the framework of the World Summit for Children and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The themes will include better parenting, health and family life education, issues of equity and social justice and improved vocational skills. A reprogramming exercise was carried out in mid-1995 and budget shifts were made within established programmes. UNICEF and CARICOM are planning to undertake a major

Caribbean-wide conference on child rights in October 1996. As part of this process, UNICEF and the Caribbean Area Office have developed a variety of channels, networks and alliances in the subregion. National initiatives have been improved and enhanced, contributing to the efficiency and effectiveness of programmes. Subregional and national concerns were targeted to help mobilize the whole society and effect behavioural and attitudinal change.

22. UNICEF activities in the Caribbean were also extended to respond to the effects of natural disasters. In hurricane-affected countries, UNICEF provided emergency relief administered through a Donors' Group for Emergency Operations in the Caribbean, which was headed by UNDP with the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization as the coordinator for emergency activities.

23. One of UNICEF's main areas of activity is in health and family life education. This activity is implemented through a regional, multi-agency project developed in collaboration with the CARICOM secretariat and a number of United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Drug Control Programme. It seeks to strengthen in-school and out-of-school preventive education activities in substance abuse and other health-related areas, by building the capacity of teachers in the Caribbean to deliver health and family life education programmes at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of the education system.

24. In 1996, UNICEF programmes for CARICOM countries totalled US$ 5.7 million, including Jamaica, $2.7 million; Guyana, $0.9 million; and Suriname, $321,000. The United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF and the Netherlands National Committee have both been significant contributors to programmes in the Caribbean.

25. UNICEF, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Fund for Women, CARICOM, the Canadian Training Awards Project and the Caribbean Institute of Mass Communication, University of the West Indies, is also supporting the development of gender-training modules and a workbook for media practitioners. The Institute has also agreed to design an elective course for its students (Media in gender and development).

26. The International Union of Health Promotion and Education was supported at its fifteenth World Conference in Tokyo by a joint presentation of UNICEF communications activities, including one from the Caribbean concerning teen life-skills. The UNICEF/Caribbean Area Office was also represented at the Animation for Development symposium held at Orlando, Florida, in November 1994. The UNESCO Caribbean office has begun to sponsor the training of artists in animation and UNICEF/Caribbean Area Office has maintained contacts with Disney, Warner Brothers, Hanna Barbera and Proto Zoa animation studios.

3. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

27. Since 1994, UNCTAD's cooperation with CARICOM has included Assistance to Customs Automation, which was first launched in 1989 in Dominica, Montserrat, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Saint Lucia. Other users are Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. There are ongoing

implementation projects in Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Kitts and Nevis. These projects, funded by the Caribbean Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the European Union, UNDP and the Governments of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, are also established in other Caribbean countries not members of CARICOM. While much work remains to be done in each user country to enhance the utilization and benefits of the Assistance to Customs Automation project, most comptrollers of customs have reported important increases in revenues attributable to customs automation. They also consider this project to be a catalyst of regional harmonization and rationalization of customs procedures and documentation.

28. The following countries have officially requested the UNCTAD secretariat to establish a trade point: Belize, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. Following a mission carried out by UNCTAD's Special Programme for Trade Efficiency, the first trade point in a CARICOM country is expected to be inaugurated in Trinidad in June 1996. The trade point will be hosted by the Tourism and Industrial Development Company (TIDCO). Trade points are also currently being set up in Jamaica (JAMPRO) and Guyana (Guyana Export Promotion Council).

29. UNCTAD provided assistance within the framework of a "training in the field of foreign trade" (TRAINFORTRADE) project, aimed at developing regional training capacity for the production and dissemination of high-quality training programmes in trade and trade-related services in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). TRAINFORTRADE has adapted the course on trade with the European single market countries to local needs and is financed by the European Union. It is implemented jointly with the Eastern Caribbean States Export Development Agency, based in Dominica, and in collaboration with the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College of Saint Lucia.

30. In addition, UNCTAD, under its programme for the training of maritime managers (TRAINMAR), has established a network for training maritime managers in Caribbean States. The focal point in Guadeloupe covers OECS countries, as well as Spanish-speaking countries. TRAINMAR has consulted CARICOM in the planning of these activities which, while largely self-financing, received some support from France. During 1995, 10 training courses were conducted in OECS countries; all were open to regional participation and 196 participants attended the courses.

31. The UNCTAD secretariat organized in January 1995 a subregional seminar on trade and environment for the Eastern Caribbean countries which took place in Saint Kitts. In the context of an UNCTAD-United Nations Environment Programme joint project on capacity-building on trade and environment, a country case study on Jamaica was initiated. Two representatives from CARICOM also participated in an UNCTAD/Latin American Economic System regional meeting of experts on trade and environment that took place at Caracas, Venezuela (25-27 July 1995), which was jointly supported by UNEP and UNDP.

32. At the request of the CARICOM secretariat, UNCTAD is assisting in the implementation of the Caribbean Enterprise Education and Development Trust Fund Project. The long-term development objective of the project is to reduce poverty through the creation and expansion of small and micro-enterprises

throughout the subregion. UNCTAD has been requested to assist in framing a strategy for resource mobilization for this project and trust fund and in implementing the project through its Entrepreneurship and Technological Development Programme (EMPRETEC). Another EMPRETEC Caribbean project , depending on resource availability, is expected to be formally launched in the fourth quarter of 1996 with headquarters in Georgetown on the basis of discussions in Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica.

33. The UNCTAD secretariat provided organizational support to a fact-finding mission of representatives of Pacific small island States to the CARICOM region (9-11 November 1994), led by the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands and including senior officials from Nauru and the South Pacific Forum secretariat. The aim of the mission was to identify development initiatives by Caribbean small island States, with particular emphasis on issues of common concern to the Pacific and the Caribbean islands.

34. The UNCTAD secretariat has prepared a "Handbook of Economic Integration and Cooperation Groupings of Developing Countries", which includes a chapter on CARICOM and the Caribbean Development Bank. It has also prepared a study on the implications of the Uruguay Round results for the world sugar economy, particularly on new alternatives for developing countries such as the use of risk management and finance techniques. This study was presented to the fourth special Ministerial Conference on Sugar of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, held in Jamaica from 28 April to 2 May 1996. The Conference also discussed the prospects of a future international sugar protocol.

35. UNCTAD'S Debt Management and Financial Analysis System has been installed in the Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance of Trinidad and Tobago since 1987. At present, the system is fully operational and the authorities have expressed their intention to install the new version at the end of 1996 or the beginning of 1997.

36. A representative of CARICOM participated in the High-level Panel on Island Developing Countries, organized by the UNCTAD secretariat and the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the Secretariat and held in New York on 22 and 23 April 1996, and contributed to UNCTAD's forthcoming publication, "Island developing countries: trade issues and sustainable economic development".

4. United Nations Development Programme

37. UNDP has responded to the development needs of the Caribbean Community and Common Market through four country offices in Barbados, Jamaica, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. In addition to its 10 country programmes, the office in Barbados manages the Multi-island Programme in support of the eight OECS countries. The Caribbean section of the Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean is managed directly by the Division for the Caribbean at UNDP headquarters in New York and executed by the secretariat of the Caribbean Community and Common Market. In general, UNDP has been seeking to assist in strengthening human resource capabilities, on which the development of these countries will largely depend, and its offices have increasingly involved civil

society organizations in the planning and implementation of project activities at the country level.

38. The main channel of UNDP support to CARICOM is the Caribbean Regional Programme, which is in addition to the indicative planning figure allocated to individual member countries of CARICOM and to the Multi-island Programme, which is executed by OECS. The Caribbean region is usually allocated some 25 per cent of the total resources available under the Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean. Total financial resources for the subregion from the Fourth Regional Programme for the period 1992-1996 amount to approximately $7.1 million. Meetings are held frequently between the Division for the Caribbean of the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean and CARICOM. As a result of these contacts, the Regional Programme has succeeded in absorbing some important findings of the mid-term review held in 1995, namely: focusing of the programme areas, government participation and better links between the Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean. It is envisaged that future activities will concentrate on poverty elimination and social development, trade and international competitiveness, and CARICOM integration.

39. A number of regional institutions - the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA), the Caribbean News Agency (CANA), the Caribbean Food Corporation and the Consortium Graduate School of Social Sciences - have benefited from support by UNDP and have themselves helped to shape appropriate policies and strategies for the countries. UNDP support has always been based on national/regional plans and priorities and is primarily focused on five thematic areas: (a) disaster preparedness and management; (b) human resource development; (c) the strengthening of integration processes and mechanisms; (d) culture and people-oriented dimension of integration; and (e) modernization of the productive sector, innovation and competitiveness.

40. In the area of policy development, the Programme has supported a series of regional workshops and consultations which led to the preparation of a regional economic strategy for the 1990s and beyond. This regional strategy has led to the harmonization of economic policies. In following up the recommendations of the West Indian Commission, UNDP continues to pave the way for the introduction of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy, among others. UNDP support has enabled the region to better formulate and concretize its positions in respect of the multilateral trade negotiations package for the Uruguay Round and beyond.

41. As regards policy implementation, UNDP support has made possible the establishment of a regional entity, the Caribbean Food Corporation, for the promotion of agro-business. This public/private sector body has contributed to a substantial increase in the exports of non-traditional agricultural products, as well as to the foreign exchange earnings of the region.

42. The Consortium Graduate School of Social Sciences, based in Jamaica, is another example where UNDP assistance has had a regional impact. Endorsed by the Heads of Government of CARICOM to meet the need for multidisciplinary policy research and analysis of the problems of Caribbean development, the School has turned out a cadre of professionals working in government and the private sector, international agencies, universities and other tertiary institutions in

the Caribbean. In the future, the School will most likely play an important role in fashioning regional responses to poverty eradication in the follow-up to the World Conference for Social Development.

43. Several elements of the Regional Programme were utilized to forge and cement links between CARICOM and the wider Caribbean basin, particularly in the areas of private sector support services, biotechnology, cultural preservation, regional integration and, more recently, in the area of governance.

44. UNDP has assisted CARICOM in formalizing arrangements for free trade and economic cooperation among the Caribbean countries and territories of the Caribbean basin through the Association of Caribbean States (ACS). The creation of a potential market of some 204 million people, with an estimated gross domestic product (GDP) of $500 billion and annual trade in the amount of some $180 million, has brought the Caribbean integration and cooperation efforts to a new level.

45. At present, UNDP provides support to the CANA Satellite News Network to assist in more cost-effective delivery of news and information to the region. In accordance with the conclusions of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), UNDP also provides support to the strengthening of the capacity of CARICOM countries in the field of human settlements development and management, in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the Action Plan for the Human Settlements Sector in the Caribbean.

46. The Programme of Action adopted by the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994) received particular attention from UNDP. This includes the establishment of a collaborative network (SIDS/NET) to facilitate access by small island developing States to vital environmental information, and the implementation of a technical assistance programme (SIDS/TAP), based on a regional assessment of unfunded technical cooperation, to promote interregional and intraregional cooperation on sustainable development. In order to enhance the coordination of follow-up activities in the Caribbean, a joint CARICOM/ECLAC/UNDP consultative mechanism was established in Trinidad.

5. United Nations Development Fund for Women

47. In 1995, during the preparatory process for the Fourth World Conference on Women at Beijing, the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC), of which CARICOM was a member, worked with UNIFEM in the Caribbean on the coordination of the process. CARICOM monitored the preparation of the national reports on the status of women and funded some parts of UNIFEM's Caribbean Communications Strategy for the Conference. The Strategy was aimed at preparing national and regional media to cover the Conference and preparing parliamentarians and other delegates to participate in it. To this end, UNIFEM, ECLAC and CARICOM co-sponsored a retreat on conference diplomacy and negotiations in July in Barbados. The Committee was also the main funder of a gender analysis training workshop for media professionals held in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in June. UNIFEM staff participated in the seventh meeting of CARICOM Ministers Responsible for

the Integration of Women in Development in the Bahamas in May. UNIFEM has received a request from CARICOM to organize a meeting of RAC in 1996 on the draft CARICOM platform for action and is in the process of finalizing the date for the meeting.

6. United Nations Population Fund

48. Between 1992 and 1994, CARICOM served as executing and implementing agency for various UNFPA-funded projects to assist member countries of CARICOM to undertake the 1990 population and housing census, train staff and support utilization of census data in development planning. In this regard, UNFPA has collaborated with CARICOM in the field of population and development. It is currently supporting two CARICOM projects undertaking population censuses ($405,593) and census data analysis ($339,489). Total UNFPA assistance for CARICOM has been $1,512,532 to date, including the former census project with CARICOM ($767,450), in addition to the above-mentioned projects.

49. Linkages at the policy level are being sought. In July 1995, the CARICOM Heads of Government approved the Subregional Caribbean Plan of Action on Population and Development. CARICOM was represented at the preparatory meeting for a new programme cycle for the English-speaking Caribbean States, which took place in Jamaica from 29 February to 1 March 1996. CARICOM will be consulted as part of the Programme Review and Strategy Development activity.

50. The new Caribbean Programme of UNFPA Development Cooperation will continue to strengthen collaboration with CARICOM in the 1997-2000 programme cycle.

7. United Nations International Drug Control Programme

51. The CARICOM secretariat and the Regional Office of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) in Barbados maintain regular contact in order to exchange information on operational issues and to expand cooperation and coordination between both organizations.

52. The Community participated in several UNDCP projects, including the Drug Control Legal Training Programme, which was executed by the University of the West Indies and concluded in December 1995. CARICOM was a member of the Project Advisory Committee of that Programme.

53. CARICOM participated fully in the Regional Meeting on Drug Control Cooperation in the Caribbean, which was organized by UNDCP at Bridgetown, Barbados, from 15 to 17 May 1996. The meeting adopted the Plan of Action for Drug Control Coordination and Cooperation in the Caribbean, which outlined measures aimed at better national coordination bodies, legislation, law enforcement, demand reduction and maritime cooperation in the field of drug control. The implementation of the Plan of Action will require mechanisms for closer regional and international coordination and cooperation, as well as the strengthening of existing structures. It is envisaged that CARICOM will play an important role in facilitating the implementation of the Plan of Action.

8. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

54. UNHCR has sought and obtained the support of the CARICOM secretariat to ensure accession to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol by States members of CARICOM that have not yet done so.

55. Support has also been sought for the UNHCR proposal to members of CARICOM that have adhered to the 1951 Convention regarding harmonization of existing refugee national legislation for the implementation of the above-mentioned international instruments.

9. International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

56. While INSTRAW has not carried out any specific programmes with the Caribbean Community during the biennium 1995-1996, the Institute hosted a workshop on women and sustainable development in Santo Domingo on 17 March 1995 as part of phase II of INSTRAW's special project on development of communications materials for women in development.

57. One of INSTRAW's core programmes of work for the biennium 1996-1997, "Women, media and communications", encompasses a subprogramme on empowering women through the use of computer-mediated communication technologies, aimed at women's organizations in the South. INSTRAW will carry out research to identify why most women's organizations do not take advantage of the potential benefits of such technologies and identify means by which women's organizations can use these technologies to their full potential in their daily work. A user-friendly manual will be prepared which will be tested in two national workshops to be held in Barbados and the Dominican Republic.

10. International Labour Organization

58. In May 1982, ILO and CARICOM signed an agreement which sought to ensure closer collaboration between the two organizations in all matters arising in the spheres of labour, social policy and related matters of mutual interest. Within the framework of this agreement, it was agreed that ILO and CARICOM would keep each other informed of the development of their respective activities with regard to social questions; participate in each other's meetings as observers; and cooperate in the collection, analysis, publication and diffusion of statistical information. Under the agreement, CARICOM may request ILO to act as executing agency for operational technical cooperation activities.

59. To ensure closer collaboration and cooperation between the two organizations, the Directorate of the ILO Caribbean Office and the CARICOM secretariat are in constant contact to discuss matters of mutual concern. In addition, dissemination of information is maintained through the exchange of newsletters and other periodic publications.

60. The ILO Caribbean Office is currently engaged in the development of a data bank on labour issues and has been carrying out liaison with the CARICOM

secretariat for the provision of any relevant data. One output will be the regular publication of a series of labour market indicators, which is expected by the end of 1996.

61. The ILO is invited to participate as an observer in the following CARICOM meetings: Standing Committee of Ministers Responsible for Labour, Standing Committee of Ministers Responsible for the Integration of Women in Development, Standing Committee of Ministers Responsible for Education, CARICOM Regional Advisory Committee for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, meeting of CARICOM Heads of Social Security, and Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians.

62. In response to views expressed by ministers of labour at the thirteenth meeting of the Standing Committee of Ministers Responsible for Labour in 1995, on the need to meet more frequently to consider regional and international developments in the labour field, ILO, in collaboration with the CARICOM secretariat, convened a meeting of Caribbean Ministers Responsible for Labour in April 1996.

63. As a result of discussions on issues arising from the World Summit for Social Development, the sixteenth meeting of CARICOM heads of Government in 1995 requested the CARICOM secretariat to organize a regional economic and social conference to be held in the second half of 1996. The CARICOM secretariat has requested the assistance of ILO in the preparation of the Conference.

64. A ministerial meeting on poverty eradication will be convened by ILO, ECLAC and other United Nations agencies in Antigua in September 1996. This meeting is a follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and is expected to review the Copenhagen Plan of Action from the standpoint of issues of particular concern to countries of the Caribbean. CARICOM will be among the sponsoring agencies.

65. Within the framework of the CARICOM project on model legislation to improve the legal status of women in CARICOM, ILO has commented on draft legislation on equal pay for work of equal value and equality of opportunity and treatment for women in employment for CARICOM countries.

66. In addition, with the assistance of ILO, the CARICOM secretariat prepared a project on public education programmes on legal rights of women, funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD). Under this project, ILO engaged the services of an external collaborator to prepare a handbook entitled "Women, Labour and the Law" based on CARICOM's model legislation and relevant ILO international labour standards. Upon finalization of the handbook, the CARICOM secretariat, in collaboration with ILO, organized and conducted a workshop on information and legal strategies on women workers' rights in 1995.

67. In the framework of the CARICOM project on harmonization of labour legislation, ILO provided assistance to the CARICOM secretariat in drafting model legislation. The first draft was approved by the Standing Committee of Ministers Responsible for Labour at its thirteenth meeting in 1995.

68. In pursuance of its commitment to promoting the harmonization of regional labour legislation, the Standing Committee of Ministers Responsible for Labour requested in 1995 that work on developing models continue. The next topic designated to be the subject of model legislation is occupational safety and health, which is scheduled to be submitted to the Standing Committee for approval in 1997.

69. At the request of the CARICOM secretariat, ILO undertook a feasibility study on establishing a regional actuarial capability, and on the basis of the report prepared a project to support the establishment of the CARICOM Actuarial Service (CAS). The project was approved by the seventh meeting of Heads of CARICOM Social Security Organizations in March 1996.

70. A study on terms and conditions of employment of teachers funded by ILO at the primary and general secondary levels, including technical and vocational schools, in both the public and private sectors in selected CARICOM member States was presented to a UNESCO meeting in 1996 and is being finalized for publication.

71. CARICOM has endorsed the ILO initiative on a Caribbean regional technical support programme to promote training and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Preliminary activities under this programme began in 1996.

72. In addition, ILO is a member of the CARICOM Regional Advisory Committee for the implementation of the CARICOM Regional Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, which was adopted by the eighth meeting of the Standing Committee of Ministers Responsible for Education. The Strategy provides a cohesive framework for developing, improving and coordinating technical and vocational education and training in the region.

11. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

73. UNESCO and CARICOM signed a cooperation agreement in 1980. During the period under review, UNESCO organized, with the collaboration of CARICOM, a regional workshop (Guyana, 10-17 March 1995) aimed at assisting the States members of the Community in building and improving national capabilities for the systematic production and dissemination of education statistics and the development of common education indicators. UNESCO was also represented at the meeting of CARICOM Ministers Responsible for Education and Culture at Kingston, Jamaica, in May 1996.

12. Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization

74. The issue of a formal agreement between PAHO and CARICOM was raised on several occasions, and a decision to proceed was finally reached in 1982 between the then Director of PAHO, Dr. Acuña, and Dr. King, then Secretary-General of CARICOM, and it was revised in 1983. A Memorandum of Understanding for the Joint Execution of the Commonwealth Caribbean Regional Project for the Education and Training of Allied Health Personnel was signed in 1984.

75. The PAHO/CARICOM relationships guided by the 1983 Agreement emphasized joint activities as the two organizations function as the secretariat for the Caribbean Cooperation in Health Initiative. PAHO and CARICOM jointly assist in the promotion of projects and their development for the Initiative. They also develop annual work plans that define promotional activities and assign responsibilities, except for those activities conducted nationally. Finally, together they are responsible for providing information about the Initiative and its development and for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

76. CARICOM is an observer at meetings of the governing bodies of PAHO and other meetings. Similarly, PAHO is an observer at the meetings of the Conference of CARICOM Ministers Responsible for Health and related meetings.

77. CARICOM participated in the two meetings held every year with the PAHO senior managers in the Caribbean. The Caribbean Cooperation in Health Initiative has been a permanent agenda item at these meetings, in which the work plans and other aspects of the Initiative are discussed and developed. PAHO staff also attended CARICOM programme meetings at which the Health Section plans and possible PAHO input were presented. PAHO included in its budget funds to assist CARICOM, particularly in the organization and follow-up of the ministerial meetings.

78. Technical support provided by PAHO on a regular basis includes support for: the establishment of a common registration examination for nurses; the Caribbean Regional Drug Testing Laboratory; the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute; the Commonwealth Caribbean Medical Research Council; and the University of the West Indies. PAHO has just signed an agreement with CARICOM and UNDP to execute a project for public education on health issues. PAHO also provides technical support to, and management of, the subregional centres, the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre and the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute. There has been close collaboration in the programme for HIV/AIDS and in human resource development.

79. The relationship between PAHO and CARICOM has been to the benefit of health in the Caribbean. The effectiveness of the collaboration has improved during the last decade because of the following: the focus for concerted action provided by the Caribbean Cooperation in Health Initiative; the conviction at the highest levels of both organizations that cooperation is desirable and feasible; better understanding on the part of both secretariats of the missions and constitutional responsibilities of the two organizations; ministerial support for collaborative action; and the presence of the Office of the Caribbean Programme Coordinator with staff oriented towards cooperation with CARICOM.

13. International Monetary Fund

80. Cooperation between the International Monetary Fund and CARICOM is mostly carried out within the multilateral framework of the Caribbean Group for Cooperation in Economic Development chaired by the World Bank. In addition, the Fund supports CARICOM's work directly through financial assistance to the Caribbean Centre for Monetary Studies (CCMS) and its participation, through its

Research Department, in a study on the special problems posed for small and micro-island economies being undertaken by CCMS.

14. International Telecommunication Union

81. Apart from direct cooperation with CARICOM, ITU also cooperates with various CARICOM organizations such as the Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU) and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA).

82. Among its other activities, ITU collaborated with CARICOM, UNDP and the Caribbean News Agency (CANA) in the implementation of the project for the establishment of the Regional Satellite News Network, and participated in CARICOM meetings on telecommunication matters of importance to information and communication in the Caribbean (Georgetown, Guyana, May 1995), and in the first CARICOM meeting of the Standing Committee of Ministers Responsible for Information (Saint Kitts and Nevis, December 1995).

83. In 1996, ITU participated or will participate in the Regional Information Infrastructure Task Force; follow-up to the CARICOM Working Group on Telecommunications Issues, and the CARICOM Working Group on New Developments in Telecommunications. During 1995 and 1996 ITU also sponsored a wide variety of workshops, training courses, consultancies and other activities furthering telecommunications policy and its practical application within the Caribbean region.

15. International Maritime Organization

84. Pursuant to their Agreement of Cooperation of 6 September 1985, IMO and CARICOM have established and maintained consultations and working arrangements to initiate or advance projects and activities for the benefit of the States and Territories in the wider Caribbean region.

85. Through its regional consultant on marine pollution, port safety and security posted in Puerto Rico, IMO is currently assisting States and territories in the preparation of contingency plans for responding to maritime incidents involving spillage of oil and other hazardous substances. In this context, within the framework of the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response, adopted under the auspices of IMO in 1990, and the UNDP Caribbean Plan of Action for Protection of the Marine Environment, IMO organized a meeting of government-designated experts of the Caribbean region on oil spill contingency planning, held at Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles, from 23 to 27 November 1992. The Governments in the region also have access to advisory services, training, research and information services under the IMO subprogramme for the protection of the marine environment (1992-1995).

86. Between 1980 and 1994, IMO fielded a regional maritime safety adviser in the Caribbean to assist the countries and territories of the subregion that are members of CARICOM. The project activities included the establishment of maritime administrations, the development of shipping legislation, the

implementation of national maritime safety programmes and the examination and certification of seafarers.

87. IMO has recently completed a major programme in the Caribbean to develop a regional agreement on port State control aimed at ensuring higher safety standards in shipping and prevention of marine pollution from ships operating in the area. CARICOM was involved in this process and participated actively in a meeting held in Barbados in February 1996 at which the Agreement on Port State Control was signed by the island nations and territories concerned. In the context of this programme, IMO trained Caribbean ship inspectors to carry out port State control functions in preparation for the implementation of the Agreement, and a further training programme has been developed to provide sufficient inspectors throughout the subregion.

16. International Fund for Agricultural Development

88. Total IFAD lending to the member countries of CARICOM, including two projects approved at the Executive Board meeting last April, amounts to $42.62 million.

89. The main objective of the recently approved rural enterprise projects for Dominica and Saint Lucia is to offer smallholders and other poor rural households, particularly households headed by women, the option to broaden their income base and reduce risk through the encouragement of a wide range of productive activities, both on- and off-farm. This objective supports the Governments' policies regarding national economic diversification and support for farmers marginalized by the changing banana industry. Two central elements of the projects' strategy to address constraints would be: (a) to strengthen the market for rural services, on both the supply and the demand side; and (b) to maximize the participation of poor rural households in project decision-making. The "rural enterprise" approach from which both projects borrow their title is meant to encourage rural households to consider all on- and off-farm activities as businesses.

90. New projects for Belize and Guyana are already in the pipeline and scheduled for submission to the Executive Board in April 1997 and December 1996, respectively. Studies for inclusion in the pipeline of a new project for Jamaica are envisaged for 1997.

17. United Nations Industrial Development Organization

91. Substantive cooperation between UNIDO and CARICOM was focused during 1995 on two joint projects: preparatory assistance for the strengthening of the training capability of the Caribbean subregion for human resources development for industry and a workshop on the implications of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) for CARICOM industry.

92. Draft project reports were finalized during meetings held in Barbados in April 1995 and in Jamaica in November 1995, respectively, both with participants

including representatives of most Caribbean countries, the private sector and bilateral and multilateral development institutions. The NAFTA workshop included participants from Canada, Mexico and the United States. Follow-up proposals agreed on at those meetings are being developed for implementation.